

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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R 171830Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4830

INFO COMICEDEFOR

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SECDEF WASHDC

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

UNCLAS REYKJAVIK 1284

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR MARR IC US

SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER INTERVIEWED ON

DEFENSE MATTERS

REF: REYKJAVIK 1277

1. IN SEP 16 TELEVISION INTERVIEW, FOREIGN MINISTER EINAR AGUSTSSON EMPHASIZED THAT PROGRESSIVE PARTY'S STAND ON DEFENSE MATTERS REMAINED UNCHANGED DESPITE CURRENT COALITION WITH INDEPENDENCE PARTY, I.E., PP WANTS NO FOREIGN TROOPS IN ICELAND IN PEACETIME. HE LAMENTED FACT THAT PARLIAMENTARY SUPPORT FOR PREVIOUS LEFTIST GOVERNMENT'S DEFENSE POLICY NO LONGER EXISTS, BUT SAID HE RECOGNIZED REALITIES, AND THAT HE WOULD WORK WITHIN COALITION TO TRY TO BRING ABOUT ADJUSTMENTS IN THE DEFENSE ARRANGEMENT. EMBASSY'S TRANSLATION OF INTERVIEW FOLLOWS:

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2. Q. MR FOREIGN MINISTER, HAS ANYTHING BEEN HEARD

FROM THE AMERICANS ABOUT THE PROPOSALS MADE BY THE ICELANDIC GOVERNMENT IN THIS MATTER?

3. A. NO THERE HAS BEEN NO REPLY FROM THEM.

4. Q. WAS SUCH A REPLY EXPECTED OR DO THEY NEED AS LONG A TIME FOR CONSIDERING THE PROPOSALS AS NOW HAS PASSED SINCE THEY WERE PRESENTED?

5. A. IT WOULD NOT BE RIGHT TO TALK ABOUT A STIPULATED TIME FOR CONSIDERATION; CONDITIONS, OF COURSE, HAVE CHANGED IN THIS COUNTRY. THERE WERE ELECTIONS AND THE RESULT OF THESE WAS THAT THE FORMER GOVT DID NOT HAVE A MAJORITY AND THE PROPOSALS OF THE FORMER GOVT THAT WERE MADE LAST MARCH DO NOT OBVIOUSLY HAVE A MAJORITY BACKING IN THE ALTHING.

6. Q. ARE THEN THOSE SUGGESTIONS IN FACT COMPLETELY OUT OF THE PICTURE?

7. A. THEY ARE FOR THE TIME BEING. WE MUST GO A LITTLE BACK IN TIME ON THIS ISSUE AND BRING FORTH THE SUGGESTIONS MADE BY THE AMERICANS IN NOVEMBER 1973 AND SEE WHETHER WE CANNOT IMPROVE ON THESE AND TRY TO USE THESE AS A BASIS FOR THE DISCUSSIONS AHEAD.

8. Q. ARE THESE AMERICAN SUGGESTIONS ALONG MUCH THE SAME LINE AS THE POLICY OF THE PRESENT GOVT IN THIS MATTER?

9. A. I WOULD NOT WANT TO SAY THAT THEIR DIRECTION IS EXACTLY THE SAME BUT AT LEAST THEY SOMEWHAT APPROACH MY WISHES, I.E., THERE IS MENTION OF REDUCING THE IDF ACCORDING TO CERTAIN RULES, AND I WANT TO MAKE IT KNOWN THAT THE POLICY OF THE PP IN DEFENSE MATTERS IS UNCHANGED FROM WHAT IT WAS IN THE FORMER ADMINISTRATION. IT IS OUR WISH THAT THE ARMED FORCES LEAVE, WE DO NOT CONSIDER THEM NECESSARY HERE IN TIME OF PEACE. HOWEVER, BECAUSE THE IP DOES NOT WANT TO GO FURTHER TOWARDS ADJUSTING THE DEFENSE  
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AGREEMENT THAN IS EVIDENT IN THE GOVERNMENT PLATFORM, THEN, FOR THE TIME BEING, WE MUST BE CONTENT WITH THIS AND WORK ACCORDINGLY AND TRY TO BRING ABOUT THE ADJUSTMENTS WE CAN IN COOPERATION WITH THE PRESENT COALITION PARTNER.

10. Q. IS IT NOT SOMEWHAT DIFFICULT TO TURN NOW TO THE AMERICANS WITH COMPLETELY DIFFERENT PROPOSALS AS COMPARED WITH THE LAST TIME?

11. A. I DO NOT TRY TO HIDE THAT I WOULD, OF COURSE,

HAVE PREFERRED THAT THE PARLIAMENTARY BALANCE HAD TURNED OUT IN SUCH A WAY THAT WE COULD HAVE CONTINUED TO IMPLEMENT THOSE PROPOSALS WHICH WE HAD AGREED TO IN THE FORMER GOVERNMENT. ON THE OTHER HAND, PEOPLE MUST FACE FACTS, AND THE FACTS ARE THAT THERE IS NOT A PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY FOR THOSE SUGGESTIONS. IT WAS THEREFORE MY VIEW, WHEN I WAS ASKED TO BECOME FOREIGN MINISTER IN THIS GOVT, THAT IT WOULD BE WORTH THE EFFORT TO TRY TO BRING FORTH ADJUSTMENTS IN THE DEFENSE STRUCTURE. THIS I WILL TRY TO DO TO THE EXTENT THAT THE COALITION PARTNERS CAN AGREE TO AND AS FAR AS THE NEGOTIATORS ON THE OTHER SIDE CAN MEET US.

12. Q. THESE NEGOTIATIONS WILL TAKE PLACE IN ABOUT TEN DAYS OR SO. WHAT IS LIKELY TO BE THE NEXT STEP AFTER THESE HAVE TAKEN PLACE? WILL A JOINT COMMITTEE BE SET UP TO DEAL WITH THESE MATTERS OR WILL THERE BE A FURTHER EXCHANGE OF PROPOSALS ON A SIMILAR BASIS AS HAS BEEN THE CASE DURING THE PAST 2-3 YEARS?

13. A. THIS WILL, OF COURSE, ONLY TAKE PLACE IN CONSULTATIONS WITH THE AMERICAN NEGOTIATORS. IT IS RATHER DIFFICULT FOR ME TO SPEAK OUT ON THIS MATTER, BUT I WOULD THINK THAT A JOINT COMMITTEE WOULD BE ESTABLISHED HERE, MADE UP OF OFFICIALS FROM THE FOREIGN MINISTRY ON THE ONE HAND, AND THE AMBASSADOR AND THE ADMIRAL, FOR EXAMPLE, ON THE OTHER. IN THIS COMMITTEE WE WOULD DISCUSS POSSIBLE CHANGES IN THE DEFENSE STRUCTURE WITH THE AIM OF REDUCING THE ARMED FORCES TO THE EXTENT THAT IS POSSIBLE, BUT NOT AT ALL IN SUCH A WAY, AS SOME SEEM TO THINK, THAT DEFENSES ARE TO BE INCREASED HERE. THIS HAS NOT BEEN SPOKEN  
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OF AND THIS WILL NOT TAKE PLACE WHILE I AM MINISTER.

14. Q. THREE YEARS PASSED FROM THE TIME THAT THE PREVIOUS GOVT TOOK POWER UNTIL IT LEFT OFFICE AND VERY LITTLE HAPPENED IN THESE MATTERS IN FACT, ALTHOUGH CONTINUED TALKS TOOK PLACE, AS MENTIONED BEFORE. HAS A TIME LIMIT BEEN PLACED FOR A SOLUTION IN THIS MATTER?

15. A. NO, WE HAVE NOT YET DONE SO BUT I DO THINK, FOR THE SAKE OF ALL THINGS, THAT IT WOULD BE BEST NOT TO POSTPONE THIS FOR TOO LONG. IT IS OF COURSE CORRECT THAT THE LEFTIST GOVT WAS IN OFFICE FOR THREE YEARS. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE TALKS WITH THE AMERICANS DID NOT BEGIN IN FACT UNTIL NOV 1973 IN ANY SERIOUSNESS. WHEN THE FISHING LIMIT AGREEMENT WITH THE BRITISH WAS CONCLUDED, THEN WE TURNED TO DEFENSE MATTERS, AND ONE DID NOT HAVE ANY IDEA THEN THAT THE FORMER GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT STAY IN OFFICE FOR CONSIDERABLE PERIOD, AND

I HAD HOPED THEN THAT IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO SET THIS  
PROJECT IN MOTION AT LEAST. WELL, THINGS WENT THE WAY  
THEY WENT, AS WE KNOW THE GOVT LOST ITS MAJORITY AND  
THIS ISSUE HAS IN FACT BEEN DORMANT SINCE LAST APRIL.

16. EMBASSY COMMENT WILL BE TRANSMITTED TOMORROW IN  
SEPTTEL.  
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